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**RING LEADER IN BUTTE COUNTY I.D. THEFT CONSPIRACY**  
**PLEADS GUILTY**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that JODI LYNN GARCIA, 31, of Paradise, California, pled guilty this morning to two federal conspiracy offenses, a single count of bank fraud, and a single count of aggravated identity theft before United States District Judge Frank C. Damrell Jr.

This case is the product of a combined investigation by the Butte County Sheriff's Department, Chico Police Department, the United States Postal Inspection Service, and other law enforcement agencies in Northern California, specifically including state and local authorities in Glenn, Tehama, and Plumas Counties.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Michelle Rodriguez, who is prosecuting the case, documents filed in court indicate that from November 2006 through June 2007, GARCIA approached various associates and requested that they cash forged checks stolen from the U.S. Mail. GARCIA also asked her associates to negotiate checks that had been specially manufactured with the associate's name and using account numbers obtained from stolen financial information. GARCIA herself participated in the scheme by cashing checks manufactured with stolen account i.d. information. GARCIA used phoney California driver's licenses to cash checks.

GARCIA successfully solicited several individuals to participate in the criminal scheme, including HEATHER MICHELLE WILSON, 34, of Chico, California, who pleaded guilty on September 24, 2007, to 5 counts of bank fraud, a single count of possession of stolen U.S. Mail, and a single count of conspiracy; TIFFANY ANN SABRAL, 27, of Chico, California, who pleaded guilty on August 27, 2007 to 2 counts of bank fraud and a single count of conspiracy, and TANYA LESLIE WELLMAN, 37, of Durham, California, who suffered conviction on September 14, 2007 for 4 counts of bank fraud and a single count of conspiracy. The conspirators stole between \$30,000 and \$70,000 from victim banks and financial institutions. From November 2006 through July 2007, there were more than 50 different victims targeted by the conspirators.

Another of GARCIA's associates, MELISSA ANN MEIER, 19, of Chico, California (arrested on August 21, 2007) is facing charges as a co-conspirator. MEIER is additionally charged with aggravated i.d. theft, bank fraud, and possession of stolen U.S. Mail. MEIER's next court date is scheduled on October 15, 2007 before Judge Damrell. These pending charges are only allegations and MEIER is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

GARCIA's sentencing hearing is scheduled for December 10, 2007. WILSON's sentencing hearing is scheduled for January 14, 2008, WELLMAN's sentencing hearing is scheduled for January 28, 2008, and SABRAL's sentencing hearing is scheduled for November 5, 2007. All sentencing hearings will be before Judge Damrell.

GARCIA is facing up to 5 years imprisonment for each of her conspiracy convictions, up to 30 years imprisonment for her bank fraud conviction, and she will receive a mandatory 2 year sentence for her aggravated i.d. theft conviction. WILSON, WELLMAN, and SABRAL each faces up to 30 years imprisonment for bank fraud and up to five years additional imprisonment for participation in the conspiracy and for possession of stolen U.S. Mail. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

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